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HOSPITAL AND TRAINING SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

COÖPERATION BETWEEN HOSPITAL DEPARTMENTS AND THE TRAINING SCHOOL

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Supplies and equipment are subjects foremost in the minds of hospital boards and superintendents today, owing to the increased cost of materials of all kinds, and it is absolutely necessary, if we are to maintain the usual standard of work in our institutions, that we conserve, but there can be no far-reaching results until all departments are intelligently informed of the need of this conservation.

Facts in regard to the cost of maintaining each department must be brought to them very forcibly in comparative statements. We get very little response from simply cutting down orders with no other explanation than the increasing cost of such commodities. We must assume that the heads of departments are intelligent men and women who will, if properly approached, avail themselves of every opportunity to demonstrate their ability to run their particular part of the work better than ever before. That they may visualize conditions regarding costs, they should be given definite information as to the condition of the market, should be asked to express opinions regarding the best materials for purchase or, in other words, should be made to feel that they are a part of the machinery of the hospital. Hospital superintendents, it would appear, have made a mistake in the past by keeping the facts regarding the financial operations of the institution so mysteriously hidden from their assistants.

Individuality must be developed. No person of any enthusiasm or initiative is coming into an institution to pick up a collection of obsolete traditions and carry them about for any length of time, without deciding that they have outgrown their usefulness in their present state or that they need rejuvenation. New ideas are the things that force progress upon us, we must have them if we are going to stay in the race. So, when they come, accept them gladly. There are always some which are valuable and which will repay for the time spent listening to the visionary ideals.

Coöperation, to our mind, does not consist of absolute agreement with one person's ideas, that is more a form of autocracy. Coöperation should mean the selection of a group of ideas which are most applicable to the need of a given undertaking and the combined efforts

of many members to bring them to perfection. It seems reasonable that much more coöperation would be secured if the heads were regularly called together and brought face to face with the operating cost and given the privilege of suggesting ways and means of decreasing this cost without harm or inconvenience to the patient. There are few individuals who do not possess some degree of initiative, thrift or originality, if given an opportunity to develop it. This will not come about through lack of individual expression and suppression of initiative when demonstrated. If a head of a department feels that the superintendent of the hospital or of the training school is desirous of accepting good suggestions, she will put more effort into developing her department. We have often heard these people say, "I could do this or that if I could only get some coöperation" from another department closely affiliated or from the superintendent of the hospital.

There is no one who does not lose enthusiasm after butting against a stone wall for a long period of time with no result, and some institutions have not succeeded in developing their greatest service in the community because they have not considered individual expansion and development as necessary, subsidizing each department under a general head, instead of each departmental head standing out as an entity in herself. We need persons well trained and with ability and enthusiasm in these positions. They must be well paid and given an opportunity to develop the position and themselves. One such person is equal to two average individuals who can carry the mechanical operation of a department but who do not add to the hospital organization a force which must develop it. A hospital staff composed of such heads coöperating to the fullest degree means decreased cost through elimination of waste, and increased efficiency through a better service to the community.

The standardization of equipment is initially a very expensive procedure and unless it can be rigidly maintained in each department the result is not far-reaching. This means that every article must be accounted for each week or month, whichever the case may be, and that it must be kept in the best of order, well taken care of at all times and used only for the purpose for which it is intended. When this is not done, much is lost or broken by the end of the year and with no satisfactory explanation for its disappearance. Each head of a department must hold her nurses or employees responsible for whatever part of the equipment they use and must see that when the standards are inventoried at regular intervals her count is intact or that she has a definite explanation for breakage, as all maintaining of standards should be done through an exchange. If this method is adhered to, the hospital will save hundreds of dollars each year as

well as render much better service, having an equipment which will facilitate the duties of the nurse or employee as well as make them more efficient. No one person can handle this situation successfully; she may inaugurate it but it cannot be maintained without coöperation from every department. The results to be obtained through such coöperation cannot but be easily realized after outlining the needs. When people of equal ability and training are working together, each an expert in a special type of work, each recognizing the ability of the other, meeting her half way and realizing the common end for the general good, we may be able not only to outline but to carry to a successful issue some of our ideals.

Do not for a moment think that a millenium is expected, it is not. Nor is equal ability expected in all lines, but the majority of individuals possess an ability of a type which may be equal to another ability and yet not be synonymous. We should have the very best people we can find for each department, and coöperate to the last degree with the policies outlined to meet the real needs of the individual institution which will render it a valuable asset to the community. But no business which is run on a *laissez-faire* policy is fulfilling its greatest service. Hospitals, although in the most part philanthropic or municipal and state enterprises, have quite as great a need of efficient administration as any modern business house, the difference being only in the product. The modern business estimates the degree of its success upon its financial returns, the hospital upon its value to the community, or the amount of service rendered for each dollar spent.

MORTALITY OF MOTHERS IN CHILDBIRTH

Of the two and three-quarter million women of child-bearing age, from 15 to 44, the majority of whom are wives and mothers, holding policies in the industrial department of the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, 1769 died during 1916, from diseases and conditions incident to childbirth. The number of deaths was 7.01 per hundred thousand white female policy holders, ages 15 to 44, in 1911 and 62.6 in 1916. Among colored women of the same ages, the rate was 88.4 per hundred thousand in 1911, as against 70.4 in 1916. In other words, the general conditions of mortality from the puerperal causes were practically the same among colored women in 1916 as among white women only six years earlier. Childbirth fever or puerperal septicemia was the most important of the particular diseases and conditions responsible for this maternal mortality, being responsible for 41 per cent of these deaths. To albuminuria and convulsions associated with child-bearing can be credited 29 per cent; to the accidents of labor, 10 per cent; to the accidents of pregnancy, chiefly abortion and miscarriage, 8 per cent; and to puerperal hemorrhage, 8 per cent. These figures show a continued decrease in the death rate in the year 1916 from the causes associated with childbirth.